FIRST RECORD OF CHARAXES LATONA BUTLER (LEPIDOPTERA: NYMPHALIDAE) FROM AUSTRALIA

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Abstract

Three specimens of *Charaxes latona* Butler (Lepidoptera: Nymphalidae) are recorded from Cape York, northern Queensland, these being the first Australian record for this butterfly. The subspecific status of the Australian specimens is uncertain.

Introduction

Charaxes latona Butler is a large, fast flying, and conspicuous nymphalid butterfly which is widely distributed within the Australian region. It occurs on Bachan, Halmahera, and Obi Islands in the Moluccas, the Aru Islands, mainland West Irian and Papua New Guinea, Fergusson and Goodenough Islands in the D'Entrecasteux group, the Bismark Archipelago, and Bougainville in the Solomon Islands. D'Abrera, (1978) recognises 13 subspecies from the region.

In June and July, 1978 three males were taken, and others observed flying, in rain forest at Iron Range, Cape York Peninsula, a well known area which has been subjected to extensive collecting in recent years (Monteith and Hancock, 1977).

Material

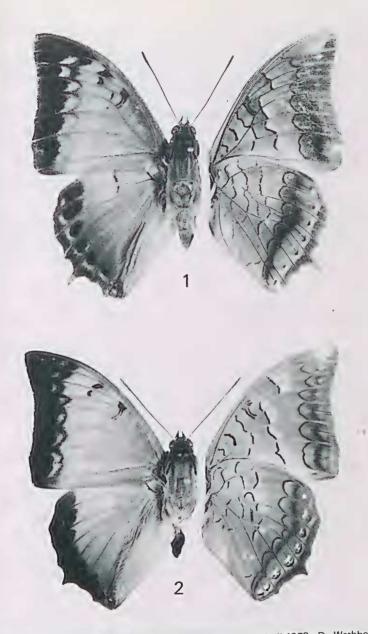
2 d, Iron Range, 29.vi.1978, 7.vii.1978 M. De Baar (in De Baar Collection); 1 d, Iron Range, 3.vii.1978, D. Washbourne (in S. J. Johnson collection).

Discussion

The adult males taken, and those observed, were flying along the margins of rain forest particularly on the summits of ridges and hills in the area adjacent to Mt. Lamond. The flight behaviour was very similar to that of the closely related *Polyura pyrrhus* (Fabricius) which was flying with *C. latona*. Both species exhibited aggressive territorial behaviour. They alignted on leaves usually six metres or higher above the ground, and rested in a characteristic head down position with wings held erect over the body.

The Australian specimens appear to differ from mainland New Guinea specimens in the width of the dark margins of the wings. The fore wing dorsal dentate submarginal band on the Australian specimens is less developed and further from the dark margin than in specimens from mainland New Guinea (compare Fig. 1 with Fig. 2). On the hind wing, the dorsal submarginal spot between CuA₁ and CuA₂ is poorly developed in the Australian specimens compared to New Guinea specimens.

There appears to be no significant difference between the underside patterns of the Australian specimens and those of the nearest New Guinea subspecies. Underside pattern and hind wing tail development in New Guinea



Figs 1-2. Charaxes latona Butler. (1) of from Iron Range, 3.vii.1978, D. Washbourne; (2) of from Gabensis, Morobe Dist., Papua New Guinea, 10.iii.1973, D. Sands (Australian National Insect Collection). Uppersides at left, undersides at right; slightly larger than natural size.

populations varies considerably between specimens from the same locality over a period of two months (Fenner, pers. comm.).

Owing to the uncertainty of the subspecific status of available New Guinea material and the scarcity of Australian specimens, we have decided to leave the subspecific status of the Australian specimens unresolved.

Acknowledgements

We are greatly indebted to Mr T. L. Fenner for his detailed comparison of photographs with specimens in the Central Reference Insect Collection, Department of Primary Industries, Konedobu. We also wish to thank Dr I. F. B. Common and Mr John Green for preparing photographs of the specimens figured.

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ANONYMOUS

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Note correction to photo caption on p.15, "right" should read "left" and vice versa 1978. Curious Australian cricket founds new family. New Sci. 79(1119): 686, illustraliso mentions Formicidae: Nothomymecia macrops

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 Hemiptera: Woolly scale, Nepidae sp.

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Coleoptera: Curculionidae: Neochetina eichorniae; Chrysomelidae: alligator weed

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flea beetle-

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Diptera: Calliphoridae: Chrysomya bezziana; Tephritidae: Dacus dorsalis, D. cucLepidoptera: Nymphalidae: Junonia erigone
Hemiptera: Aphididae: Therioaphis trifolii, Acyrthosiphon kondoi